

Soft Aspects of SPI

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Some issues encountered

1. Lack of management support
2. Unrealistic management expectations
3. Scope creep
4. Nothing happens until there is a burning platform
5. The ivory tower and NIH syndrome
6. Lack of support from domain managers
7. Lack of local support
8. Tools complications
9. Working KPA per KPA
10. Change manager burnout

1. Getting management support

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Issue:

- Managers do not know what is expected from them
- SPI is not like software development

Solutions:

- Insist of having a regular meeting at director level
- Don't be afraid to raise red flags and escalate
- Explain to manager what is expected from him/her
- Having a crisis situation
- Get an external consultant to explain and convince management
- Get personal commitment from Director
- Translation into \$

2. Unrealistic management expectations

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Issue :

- Management expects too much on short term, cannot wait for detailed planning, wants to see ROI right away

Solutions :

- Don't jump to conclusions, actions and detailed planning too quickly. Take time for preliminary steps. Explain to management.
- Have external consultant to get management back to earth
- Have a crisis situation in which targets are not met – then, a more realistic planning is easier to swallow
- Good communication on all risks, dependencies and issues

3. Scope Creep

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Issue:

- Quality team gets requests to tackle all kinds of things going wrong

Solutions:

- Have the guts to say NO
- Ask for additional resources
- Have a strong manager
- Make a clear definition of what is in scope and what is not, and communicate it
- Manage SPI like a project, having a clear and limited scope.

4. Nothing happens until there is a burning platform

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Issue :

- Nothing happens until there is a burning platform

Solutions:

- Cut budgets/threat to lose jobs, forcing people to work on SPI (but might also work in the other way)
- Link evaluation premium to implementation of quality plan
- Promise promotion or reward when CMM targets are reached

5. The ivory tower and 'Not Invented Here' syndrome

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Issue :

- SPI team invents all kinds of nice procedures in their own ivory tower

Solutions :

- Get in touch with the field via assessments
- Invite people to participate in workgroups, defining procedures and work instructions
- Take into account current problems and best practices in the field
- Look at things from the actual developer's point of view versus a KPA based view

6. Lack of support from domain managers

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Issue:

- In times of budget cuts, overload and burnout it is hard to get support for investment in SPI

Solutions:

- Work with an early adopter and make publicity on benefits and results obtained
- Have a separate budget available for SPI work
- Make a very concrete presentation of what is included in the SPI program
- Try to calculate the benefits
- Have a burning platform
- Higher management support

7. Lack of local support

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Issue :

- Everyone is already highly charged. People have no time for additional SPI work.

Solutions :

- Unload people from some other work, and give them official time to spend on SPI
- Make good explanation and plan of work expected from the local quality champions
- Get management support and commitment
- Have separate and additional budget available for SPI efforts

8. Tools complications

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Issue:

- SPI resources get completely absorbed by efforts to acquire, configure and rollout a tool

Solutions:

- Put in place a TCC (Tool Competence Center) responsible for tool related matters
- Define clear tool ownership
- Start all SPI effort without any tool : concentrate on having a good process with a very-lightweight manual process

9. Working KPA per KPA

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Issue :

- KPA's are tackled individually but there is no clear picture of the full process

Solutions :

- Have regular workshops to define/describe/review the full process, within the SPI team and with people from the field
- Do not start too quickly with KPA planning and development, first ensure a common view on the full process
- Ensure good communication between people working on different KPA's

10. Change manager burnout

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Issue:

- Being Quality Evangelist requires continuous mental effort, struggling for support, co-operation and buy-in
- In case the improvement actions don't succeed (for example due to lack of management support) burnout occurs on average after 18-24 months

Solutions:

- Move from a push to a pull approach : don't push development teams to implement CMM. Make them want or need to implement CMM, and provide support on their request.
- Management praise and encouragement (!!!!!!!)

Summary : Top 10 Key Success Factors

1. Management Support !!!!!!!!!!!!!
2. A burning platform. If there is no real urge to change people will not change
3. Manage SPI as a project (get budget, training, resources, realistic plan, tracking on progress)
4. Find early adopters
5. Create quick wins
6. Make measurements and prove benefits
7. Involve people from the field when defining 'new' procedures. Take into account their most urgent issues and their best practices
8. Use an external consultant to convince and manage your management
9. Keep focus on a few key process areas
10. Ensure clear and honest communication to everyone involved in the organisation